

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Following is a marked-up version of each amended paragraph of the subject patent application. The Examiner is requested to delete the indicated paragraph and replace it with the amended paragraph.

Replace paragraph [0030] with the following.

[0030] For example, if a new fabrication process step is introduced, the fabricating plant operator may desire to follow the field experience of integrated circuits manufactured according to the new process step. Advantageously, the ring oscillator characteristic frequency can be used to accomplish this objective. For all wafers subjected to the new process step, the oscillating frequency of each die on each wafer is measured prior to singulating the wafer dice. The frequency is associated with the new process step. Thereafter, the characteristic frequency of returned ~~retained~~ integrated circuits is measured to determine if any were fabricated according to the new process step. With the benefit of this information, failure analysis can be conducted to determine if the new process step contributed to the device failure.